

## **Chairman's Welcome**

Good morning and welcome to the 20<sup>th</sup> AGM of the friends of Bolton Priory.

I would now like to invite the Rector to lead us in the Friends' prayer

Thank you, George, and on behalf of us all I would like to welcome you and Peta home again from Tanzania

Once again I am happy to report that the friends have had a successful twelve months. You will hear reports later from the officers of your Executive Committee, covering our activities during the past year, - all of which place the friends in good shape for the future.

Your committee continue to work closely with the Rector and the PCC and I can report that during the past year we have given financial support to the Priory Church amounting to £4,641. This sum mostly covered the restoration of the brass altar cross, 2 brass candle sticks and the 3 piece solid silver communion set, which I am sure you will all agree is most handsomely displayed for all to see when they visit or worship at the Priory. The remaining sum of money covered new display for the a frame in the nave.

i would like to speak to about our membership. While this is reasonably strong, a high proportion of this number are by no means local or even members of our congregation. From time to time, our Hon Membership Secretary, Colin Sutcliffe, writes an article in the Parish Magazine where he explains the aims of the friends and amongst other things the need for us to recruit more local folk and members of the congregation into our ranks if we are to be able to continue our social activities. I have to say that it is with regret that i must inform you he has had a poor response to his appeals. I find this somewhat surprising when, from time to time, we open up our activities to non members for vacancies on a coach or indeed to our excellent spring lectures, these are often taken up by members of the congregation. This is especially so in the case of the spring lecture.

To illustrate my point, we have ordered a smaller coach than usual for next month's York boat cruise as we had worries about having enough local members to fill it. Our membership fees are modest and have not been increased for twenty years. I wonder how many other organisations can say that!

May I ask you all to use your best endeavours to encourage more local people and members of our congregation to join us. It would be most gratifying to see some of the young people about to marry join our ranks. We do need some young blood and I am thinking here of "the better for worse club."

You will recall that at the last AGM I shared my views with you over how we spend our funds ,and more to the point that we had a large legacy left to us. I drew to your attention, that unless you knew otherwise, we were unlikely to receive another legacy. While at the present time our funds are healthy I am concerned that in the long term, if we are to continue to support the Priory Church in the way we would wish to do and with falling income on our investments we must look to ways of increasing our funds. It will not surprise you that your committee has discussed this from time to time, and earlier this year we decided that the time had arrived to formally ask you to consider the Friends in your will. We shall mention this in all our future Newsletters, albeit briefly.

I would like here to make mention of our Newsletter Editor, Professor Geoff Roberts, who after 20 years and 65 edition of editing the Newsletter has decided to retire at today's AGM. I will say more about this towards the end of the AGM . I am very pleased to report that Christine Dale, a committee member and past Hon Secretary has agreed to replace him as Editor in this most important post, and I thank her for doing so.

Together with the Priory website, your friends website goes from strength to strength. Our newsletters are included in the Friends' website and some members have elected to receive their copy electronically and thereby cut down the postage costs. Should any of you wish to do

this in future, please have a word with myself or Colin. Both websites attracts many favourable comments from around the world and I would commend them to you and hope that you will look at them regularly

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Executive Committee for their friendship and all the hard work they do on your behalf. I am very lucky to work with such nice and talented people.

i would like also to thank members of the committee and friends for making the food for today's lunch and a special thank you to Jill Riley and Jenny Laycock for making all the necessary arrangements for what will be a very good lunch following this AGM.

Of course each year not only brings happiness but sorrow as we think of those members who are no longer with us. May i please ask you to stand in silence for those members who have died in the past year. They are;

Mr Jack Hudson

Mrs May Harpham

Mrs Eileen Mayson

Mrs Margaret Armitage

Mrs Pauline Hodges

Mr Peter Munro